

BRAVO Zulu



VFA-106

LCdr. Jason Naidyhorski was the pilot of Roman 334 and lead for an FRS close-air-support training flight in the Fallon range complex. During the “G awareness” maneuver, his FA-18 had an uncommanded deflection of the left inboard, leading-edge flap, which caused a severe nose-down attitude and significant loss of altitude. LCdr. Naidyhorski recognized the seriousness of the situation, immediately recovered the aircraft, and climbed to a safe altitude. He did handling and controllability checks to assess if the aircraft could land in this configuration. Because he couldn't slow the aircraft below 190 knots without an unacceptable degradation to the aircraft's flying qualities, he decided to fly a 200-knot, straight-in approach.

He skillfully flew his stricken aircraft and kept it clear of populated areas. He touched down at 204 knots on runway 31L at NAS Fallon and used the long-field-arresting gear.

His event significantly contributed to the strike-fighter-community's understanding of this serious failure mode.

LCdr. Naidyhorski was awarded the Air Medal for his efforts.